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GENESIS THE THIRD:
HISTORY, NOT FABLE.

BEING THE MERCHANTS' LECTURE FOR MARCH, 1883, DELIVERED
AT THE WEIGH HOUSE CHAPEL

BY

EDWARD WHITE,

!!

MINISTER OF ST. PAUL'S CHAPEL, HAWLEY ROAD,
KENTISH TOWN.

London :

T. FISHER UNWIN, 17, HOLBORN VIADUCT.
1883.

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THE Merchants' Lecture is an ancient foundation in the City of London, now in its two hundred and tenth year. The following Discourses formed the last series delivered in the Weigh House Chapel. They are published at the request of some gentlemen who heard them, in the hope of confirming the faith of the Citizens. It is needless to add that the lecturer alone is responsible for the doctrine and exposition here set forth.

GENESIS THE THIRD: HISTORY NOT FABLE.

LECTURE I.

THE PLACE WHICH THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN OCCUPIES IN HOLY SCRIPTURE.

“As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.”—
1 CORINTHIANS XV. 21.

IN the present course of lectures I shall offer a brief view of the argument in support of the historical character of the Mosaic account of the creation, and specially of the fall, of man. The design is, perhaps, not untimely; for in some scientific circles, in which Christian faith has no place, this narrative is now regarded as one of many similar fables of the early world,—the truth being that there was no first man, and no fall of man, but a gradual rise from the animal level up to humanity, through the ages of an immeasurably distant past.

In other scientific and theological circles, where Christian faith still maintains its hold on Revelation in general, the narrative is regarded as an allegory wholly destitute of historical reality, but setting forth in pictorial form the early struggles of man with the lower forces of nature, and the ascension of the spirit, through discipline and temptation, to the heights of faith in God. Among

Christian believers of this class, it is now boldly affirmed that it is impossible to attach any historical value to the idea of the ruin of a world by the common ancestor of the race. In the language of a recent anonymous expositor of these views: "If the allegory of Eden is a Divine presentation of certain perennial facts of human nature, which man's conscience attests, and man's reason owns at this hour, then Paul's elaborate argumentation with his countrymen will have infinitely better ground to rest upon, than if he bases it on the hypothesis, at which conscience stands aghast, and by which reason is utterly revolted, that because a miraculously talking reptile persuaded an inconceivably constituted woman, six thousand years ago, to eat an actual apple, men, women, and children, in the nineteenth century, are guilty and accursed in the sight of God."

I have thought that it might be a moderately useful contribution to the cause of Scriptural Christianity to show, in opposition to such methods of dealing with Holy Scripture, what may be fairly alleged in support of the historical reality of this narrative, and what may be fairly said in reply to the more common objections to its literal credibility. It is quite impossible that genuine Science and a genuine Revelation from God can directly contradict each other. It may be that a clearer understanding of all the facts will assist faith in the complete truth, and dissipate some of the difficulties which at present occasion a seeming disconnection between the two.

Our general object will be to show first, the place which the narrative of Eden occupies in the Bible; secondly,

assuming, on the strength of evidence to be briefly indicated, that nothing is known, on a scientific basis of certainty, to compel disbelief in the recent origin of the existing human race,—to show that when the supernatural history of revelation is taken as a whole, and considered in its organic unity, there is nothing in this early narrative,—not even the incident of the serpent tempter—inconsistent with its historical credibility; and, lastly, the object will be to show that this narrative, itself, contains numerous marks of a truly Divine solution of many mysteries of human life, both as to its origin and as to its destiny.

Our business in this lecture will be to clear the ground by showing the place which the narrative of the creation and fall of man occupies in the Bible. There can be no hesitation in affirming that the Books of the Old Testament, and emphatically the books of the New Testament, with one consent, treat the narrative of the recent creation and fall of man as historical, and make it the basis of the whole system of divine dispensations towards our race, which they profess to record. In modern writings the assertion is frequently made that the earlier chapters of Genesis are manifestly symbolical, and demand no faith in their literality. But in the book of Genesis there are no signs of symbolism in the earlier portion. If there is a simple realistic style in ancient prose history anywhere, that style is found in the book of Genesis, from the beginning to the end. The story of Eden is told in as matter-of-fact a spirit as the travels of Abraham. A supernatural element appears, in each case, now and again throughout, but there is no variation in the historical tone which

characterises the narrative in all its parts. The circumstances related respecting the beginning of man's life are, of course, wonderful, but the writer never soars into poetry. If he is recording a myth, he at least records it as if he believed it to be a truth. The account of the trial in Paradise passes on into the history of the antediluvians, without any break in the narrative. Seth, Cain, and Abel seem to be as real persons as Enoch or Methuselah, and their biographies are closely annexed to the narrative of the first man's loss of Paradise. The beginning of the useful and fine arts is given with no appearance of allegory, and belongs to a story which seems to be told as if true from its beginning. Indeed, one may say that no reader would have imagined that the author was writing fables in the earlier chapters of Genesis, unless moved thereto by an imagined necessity of saving the remainder of the Bible from rejection, through the supposed incompatibility of these chapters with science, if taken in their literal sense.

It is surely a great violence in criticism to represent the author or compiler of Genesis as distinguishing in his own mind between the allegorical quality of his earlier and later chapters. Whether true or not, most certainly he delivers them as if he believed them to be true, and true in their literal sense; the first chapter relating to a very recent action of God in refitting the earth, and in creating man and certain animals upon it; the second and third recounting the moral trial of the newly-made human beings in order to decide the question of eternal obedience to their Maker, with the result of loss of life through sin, and of the prospect of immortality. The narrative professes

to account for the entrance of death into the human world, and this problem could not be solved by an allegory.

If the presence of direct Divine action, asserted in this narration, is sufficient ground for rejecting its literality, consistency will require the rejection of the whole subsequent narrative of Scripture on the same ground. The story in Genesis is not more open to objection for this reason than any other parts of the Bible. The whole Bible, certainly, may be a false record; but it is impossible to save or defend a long supernatural history simply by attempting to allegorise its earliest chapters. The narration recorded by Moses may not be true, but, at least, there is every sign that, whether original or traditional, he believed it to be true. And the fact that such a man as Moses gave forth this narrative to the Hebrew people, after a forty years' education in all the historic lore of the Egyptian schools, and a subsequent forty years of meditation upon it in the solitudes of Sinai, adds immense emphasis to this belief of his, which will be best appreciated by those who know how completely the story of Eden both agrees with, and differs from, the contemporary heathenish traditions of Memphis and Heliopolis.

Passing by the many references to Adam by name in the Old Testament, which are more frequent than appears in the English version, where "son of *man*" and "sons of *men*" stand almost everywhere for the Hebrew "son of Adam," "and sons of Adam," and passing by those frequent references in the Old Testament to "Eden," and the "garden of God," which indicate familiarity with the narrative in Genesis in the latest centuries of the

Hebrew history, let us at once direct attention to the New Testament.

It is, I think, easy to show that, throughout its books, in the teaching both of Christ and the Apostles, the narrative of Eden is not only taken for historic truth, *but is made the basis of Christianity itself as a religion of redemption.* 1. In St. Matt. xix., 3-6, we find our Lord Jesus Christ establishing the sanctity of the marriage union for all mankind from the beginning of the world, and forbidding divorce, except for unfaithfulness, on the basis of the truth of the Mosaic account of the creation of Adam and Eve, and on the authority of the words said to be spoken on the occasion of that first marriage. "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye never read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, [that is, God said, quoting Genesis ii. 24,] For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more two, but one flesh. What, therefore, *God* hath joined together, let no *man* put asunder." This is repeated in Mark x. 2-9. Christ's teaching surely is Christianity, or an important part of it, and he here most distinctly founds his own legislation in respect to the indissolubleness of marriage, except for the cause of adultery, on the historical reality of the narrative in Genesis. If he took this part of the narrative as historical truth, it is certain that he did not look upon the remainder as allegory. If the story of Adam and Eve is a fable, and these persons had no real

existence, then the alternative is, that Christ founds his law of marriage, one of the most important laws in any religion, on a fable which He mistook for a truth. And with that primary mistake his authority as a Divine legislator falls altogether.

In St. John, viii. 44, our Lord again refers to the Edenic narrative, and supplies the explanation of the temptation by the serpent. Addressing the Pharisees he said, "Ye are of your father, the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him." The word here translated "murderer" is not the ordinary *φονεύς*, but the emphatic *ἀνθρωποκτόνος* man-killer; and it plainly indicates, in conjunction with the words "from the beginning," a reference, by our Lord, to the history of the introduction of death into the world by the falsehood of the serpent in "Paradise." The life of man, looking onward to eternal life by obedience of faith, was destroyed by the Devil. St. John in his first Epistle, iii. 15, uses the same word to describe Cain who murdered Abel, *ἀνθρωποκτόνος*, and "was *out of* (or a son of) *that wicked one*, because he slew his brother." Here again it is clear that Jesus partook the general belief in the historic reality of the narrative in Genesis. His beloved disciple says, "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, to destroy the works of the Devil:" to undo the murderous work of the Serpent, by the gift of Eternal Life. But if Jesus Christ did not rightly understand the origin of the race which He came to save, did not understand, in fact, why they required to be saved,

mistook an allegory for a history, and falsely imagined the action of an Adam, and of an Adversary, who had no real existence, what remains in his teaching to which it is possible to attach any real importance?

It will be requisite to carry the allegorising process much further, and to convert the Gospel history itself and all our Lord's teaching into a fabulous representation of truths which he himself did not understand, and which have nothing whatever to do with authentic history.

If next we pass from Christ to His biographers and apostles, we find St. Luke, in the genealogy of Jesus, placing "ADAM, the son of God," at the summit of the table, evidently with as firm a persuasion of his real personality as of that of any of his successors. If we open the epistle to the Romans, we find St. Paul, the chief apostle of the Gospel, in his chief doctrinal epistle, addressed to the chief church in Christendom, laying the very foundation of the doctrine of salvation through the Incarnation, in the historic truth of the Fall of man in the book of Genesis. When he has shown that salvation, from first to last, is not man's work towards God, but God's work towards man; when he has finished his argument on the necessity of salvation by grace, not by law, if man is to be saved at all from sin and death; when he has established the doctrine of the propitiation by the sacrifice of Christ; when he has shown that the mode of applying the benefit of redemption is by the gift of faith to the sinner; he then proceeds to sum up the history of God's dealings with man, under both law and grace, in the memorable paragraph at the close of his fifth chapter. And no less than

nine times does St. Paul assume and affirm, in the most distinct manner, the truth of the narrative in Genesis respecting the entrance of death by the offence of the one man Adam ; tracing both the analogy and the difference between that history and the method of God in dealing mercifully with sinners, through the man Christ Jesus. Let any one attentively read the apostle's words, and say if he does not build the whole fabric of Christian doctrine on the reality of the history in Genesis.

“Therefore, as *through one man sin entered into the world*, and death through sin, even so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned. For before the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed where there is *no law* ; nevertheless, *death reigned from Adam to Moses*, even over them that had not sinned *after the likeness of Adam's transgression*, who is a figure of him that was to come. But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if *by the trespass of the one the many died*, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, abound unto the many. And not *as through one that sinned*, so is the gift ; for *the judgment came of one unto condemnation*, but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification. For if, *by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one*, much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ. So, then, *as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation*, even so through one act of righteousness (the free gift came) unto all men to justification of life. For, *as through one man's disobedience, many were constituted*

*sinner*s, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be constituted righteous."

Nine times in these eight verses does St. Paul affirm the literal truth of the Edenic history; and represent the Redemption in Christ as having a distinct relation to the entrance of sin and death therein described. If St. Paul was in error here at the foundation, he erred at least along with his Master, as we have seen; and if he erred in his belief on the Fall, and we can certainly know it, it is quite certain that there is nothing whatever left in his doctrinal teaching respecting the Redemption to which any divine authority can be attached. He is mistaken in the two foci of his theological system.

It is, nevertheless, an error which he repeats in many forms in his writings. Thus in chap. xvi. 20, of the same epistle, he promises the Romans, in manifest allusion to Genesis iii. 15, that "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." "The God of peace shall *bruise Satan under your feet shortly*."

Again, in writing several years before to the Corinthians, when treating of the resurrection of the saints to eternal life, in the glory of God, he had thus spoken of the origin of death, and of the cause of resurrection in these words. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For *since by man came death*, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For *as in Adam all die*, so also in the Christ shall all be made alive." And lower down, when speaking of the different constitutions of the animal and spiritual humanities, he adds, "There is a natural, or soulual, or *psychical* body, and there

is a spiritual or *pneumatical* body. And so it is written, ‘*The first man Adam became a living soul,*’ or *psyché*, the last Adam became a life-giving *spirit* or *pneuma*. Howbeit, that is not first which is spiritual or pneumatical, but that which is natural, or soulual, *psychical*, then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, *chōikos*, a man of dust. The second man is of heaven. As is the man of dust, such also are the men of dust, and as in the heavenly one, such also are the heavenly ones. And as we have borne the likeness of the man of dust, we shall also bear the likeness of the heavenly one.” (1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 44—49.) How is it possible to avoid seeing that in every expression of these verses St. Paul refers to the detailed account of the creation of Adam in the second and third chapters of Genesis, and treats the whole narrative, not only as historical, but as the record of an essential part of the general system of the Divine dealings with humanity in its psychical and pneumatical stages of development, under its two federal heads, Adam and Christ.

Again, in the same epistle, I Cor. xi. 8, Saint Paul gives as a reason why women were to be attired in a manner to represent subjection to man, thus: “For a man ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not out of the woman, *γυνή ἐξ ἀνδρός*, but the woman out of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.” Can there be any doubt that the apostle here refers to the words of Genesis ii. 23, and reasons from them as a true history. “And Adam said, This, now, is bone of my bones, and

flesh of my flesh ; she shall be called Isha, woman, because she was taken *out of man*."

In his second epistle, St. Paul does not hesitate to hold up the example of Eve's weakness as a warning to the philosophical Corinthians. "But I fear less by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ." (2 Cor. xi 3.)

In his epistle to the Ephesians the Apostle quotes the words of Genesis ii. 24, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother," &c., just as our Lord had done before him, to describe to his converts the law of marriage union fixed at the creation of Adam and Eve—a quotation without the force or authority even of antediluvian legend, unless he held the history as authentic, real, and indisputable.

In his first epistle to Timothy, he assigns as a reason for the subjection of women and their silence in church, so far as teaching in the church is concerned, the original constitution of things, and the truth of the narrative of the fall in Eden: "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Nevertheless, they shall be saved through the child-bearing (that is, of the promised "seed of the woman," the Christ), if they continue in faith and love, and sanctification with sobriety."

It is easy to see in every sentence of this exhortation that St. Paul regarded the Edenic history as a fable, no

more than he looked on the rest of the Old Testament as mythical or allegorical. Indeed, there is no narrative in the Old Testament which St. Paul so frequently refers to in his writings, as true and instructive, as that of the earlier chapters of Genesis.

In the same manner Apollos, or whoever wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, speaks of the history of the antediluvians in his eleventh chapter, from Abel downwards, as if equally authentic with that of all subsequent ages. St. John in his epistle refers, as we have seen, similarly to the history of Cain and Abel as a practical instruction in the ways of piety and faith. And, lastly, in the Apocalypse, not only is the scenery of the earthly paradise taken as a type and symbol of loftier realities beyond, but "the Devil and Satan" is twice pointed out as the "mankiller from the beginning," and described as "*the ancient serpent*, which deceiveth the whole world," so as to fix beyond dispute the diabolical nature of the power which brought upon our first parents ruin and destruction. (Rev. xii. 9, xx. 2.)

Everyone who has followed attentively this complete induction of Biblical reference to the Mosaic history of man's creation and fall, must allow that the modern attempt to resolve the early chapters in Genesis into an allegory or a fable, is inconsistent with any rational recognition of the inspiration or authority of Jesus Christ and his apostles. If their inspiration was consistent with the delusion of taking for truth an old world myth on the origin of things, with making that myth (destitute as it was, in every line, of historic reality) the very basis of their system of belief, the very centre of their circle of

instruction, the very foundation of the alleged procedure of God in redemption—then their inspiration was not of a quality to command my faith and obedience in any other particular. If the truth really be, that human nature, instead of being a recent and direct creation of God, is an ancient and gradual evolution from the animal races, a specialised form of the anthropoid apes which existed before the glacial epoch, at least a quarter of a million of years ago ; then sin in man is not sin, it is the natural and necessary outbreak of his bestial original nature ; and death is not the effect of sin, but is the necessary heritage of a being descended from living forms which never had a glimpse of immortality, the earth's mortal offspring ; and the Christian doctrine of redemption from a death incurred by sin, through the union of the Eternal Nature with man's, is at once a shocking contradiction to the facts, and a monstrous profanation of the Power which is behind the veil. Dr. Martineau, who has consistently abandoned the whole Bible as a supernatural work, justly characterises the real effect of what is considered by many the scientific improvement on the Mosaic history. He says :—" And in so far as Church belief is still committed to a given cosmogony and natural history of man, it lies open to scientific refutation, and has already received from it many a wound under which it visibly pines away. It is needless to say that the *new* 'Book of Genesis,' which resorts to Lucretius for its 'first beginnings,' to protoplasm for its fifth day, to 'natural selection' for its Adam and Eve, and to evolution for all the rest, contradicts the *old* book at every point ; and, inasmuch as it dissipates the

dream of Paradise and removes the tragedy of the Fall, cancels at once the need and the scheme of redemption, and so leaves the historical churches of Europe crumbling away from their very foundations.”—*Religion as affected by Modern Materialism*, p. 8.

It seems to me quite useless to disguise this conflict between the Bible and—not science, but that which, in the opinion of not a few in our time is thought worthy of the name of science. There can be no doubt that it is held for certain by many, including no small number of able and accomplished persons, that modern discovery has decisively proved the immense antiquity of man, his animal origin, and, consequently, the falsity of the Mosaic cosmogony and Edenic story, so that the fable of “Eve and the Apple” and the “talking serpent”—to use the favourite profane description—is widely regarded as a test measurement of any man’s ignorance and credulity. A man who will believe *that* is proved to be both ignorant of facts, and undeserving of argument.

Who that reflects on this state of things can fail to conclude that there is some great mistake *somewhere*? If the so-called scientific view of man’s origin is really scientific, that is, is a matter of certain knowledge, and not of mere guess-work (and nothing less than certain knowledge is science), why, undoubtedly it follows that, not merely Moses was mistaken, but that Christ and all his apostles were mistaken also. Christianity is one complicated mistake, for it founds a doctrine of redemption on the history of the recent creation and fall of Adam, on the moral and not animal origin of sin; and if the Adam

of Genesis never sinned, because he never existed, Christ was certainly not "sent from God," and "died in vain."

And yet one hesitates long before even contemplating this awful alternative of the abandonment of New Testament Christianity. If we speak of scientific evidence, there is other evidence also, that of Revelation, with all its complication of proofs, not lost in the dimness of past millions of ages, but very *near at hand*. Its prophetic evidence is *around us*, in the state of the world, in the state of mankind, of the Jews, of Western Asia, of Europe with its corrupted religion. Its moral evidence is *before us*, in the Bible—a library of books written during 1,500 years, and filling for eighteen centuries since with joy and wonder all human hearts that are capable of appreciating charity, or beauty, or tenderness, or truth, or love. Its spiritual evidence is *within us*, in the response of the soul to its exalted strains, its soothing consolations, its visions of eternal joy. As God said of Israel, so say we of this Book of Life, "How shall I give thee up?"—the one sweet ray of sunlight that falls on the midnight darkness of our destiny, the one soft word of pity that seems to breathe on us from the Infinite Realms in our passage to the grave. If it is unscientific to feel this, then so much the worse for the new philosophy.

Is it then *possible* that this so-called scientific conclusion of the antiquity of man, and of his bestial origin, is only a hideous delusion, notwithstanding the loud tones in which some are proclaiming it? Is it possible that this

conclusion is a mere opinion, a special guess and deduction from the wider hypothesis of general evolution; itself, however interesting and even probable, as yet not proved to the satisfaction of thoroughly educated reasoners; especially when the possible *methods* of development are positively asserted to be the ultimate *means* of creation? Is it possible that this special opinion of *Man's animal descent*, so widely received as to be even taught by certain science masters and professors, in boy-schools and Sunday-schools, and workmen's colleges, is really not proved at all, by any evidence which commands the unanimous assent of physicists or careful reasoners of the first rank? Is it possible that this notion of the antiquity of man, and his evolution from the bestial races, so far from being really established on a basis to command the general acceptance of men of the first order of knowledge—much less established in strength sufficient to explode what has hitherto been regarded as a Divine revelation—is really nothing more than one of those “winds of doctrine,” those temporary air-currents of belief, to which especially the English nature seems to be liable; due chiefly, as Dr. Dawson affirms, to an idolatrous and almost fanatical admiration for one or two leading English theorists,—to a fashion of plunging into a desperate partisanship, without regard to the state of the evidence, to which second-rate workers in art, in politics, in religion, and in science, seem specially disposed, when the evidence is obscure, and the theory is favourable to other and deeper antagonisms?

Is it possible that, when closely examined, this theory of man's immense antiquity, however boldly affirmed by some,

is resting at this moment chiefly on a sub-structure of so-called inferences from the growth of stalagmite and the age of gravels; which rouse nothing less than the indignation of men of the very first rank in knowledge, who grieve to see a mere succession of changing guesses represented to the multitudes as ascertained European science? Is it possible that statements which were put forth a few years ago in support of this theory have, one after another, been compulsorily withdrawn? Is it true that, in general, ordinary men's assurance of its truth is in inverse proportion to their detailed acquaintance with the state of the evidence? And, lastly, is it a fact that, if it were attempted at this moment to make it a test of membership in any of the great Scientific Societies of Europe, to confess the truth of the evolution theory in general, as universally and irrevocably established—much more the evolution of man from the animal races, as proved with any show whatever of positive evidence—or even the remote antiquity of the present race of man, as supported by any decisive evidence at all,—there is not one of these Societies—English, French, German, or American—which would not be rent asunder by a violent convulsion of opposing conviction, from the Royal Society downwards—so deep, so strong, so indignant is the revolt of many of the leading lights of biology and archæology against the notion that anything has been demonstrably settled to shake the public faith in the recent and direct Divine creation of the human race?

Professor Stokes, one of the Secretaries of the Royal Society, a man closely conversant with the principal scien-

tific men in Europe, in a paper recently read before the Church Congress, and repeated in a revised form elsewhere, said that in the absence of biological knowledge of our own, what must be done in order to test the value of opinions involving such momentous issues for all mankind is to examine the mode of argument of these writers in departments with which we are more familiar; and to compare the utterances of biological leaders in Europe and America; with one another; so as not to be carried away by the authority of one or two considerable names. Science signifies absolute knowledge, not the opinion of some distinguished scientific men. What is absolutely known for certain is accepted by properly-qualified investigators in all lands. Tried by this test, the widely diffused notions of the animal origin and remote antiquity of the human race break down instantly. There is scarcely a single fact in the interpretation of which the leading biologists and archæologists of the world are agreed—certainly not one which can serve as a basis for a theory solid enough to overthrow the teaching of Divine Revelation.*

* "Not a single fossil skull of an ape or ape-man has yet been found that could really have belonged to a human being." "Every addition to the amount of objects which we have obtained as materials for discussion has removed us further from the hypothesis propounded." "On the whole we must really acknowledge that there is a complete absence of any fossil type of a lower stage in the development of man."—*Professor Virchow's Presidential Address.*

"Of that line which is supposed to have reached upward to man, not the first link between the lowest level of existing man has yet been found. If the links ever existed their annihilation without trace is so exceedingly improbable it may be pronounced impossible. Until some are found science can never assert they existed."—*Professor Dana's Geology, ad finem.*

The work of examining the contradictory testimonies and opinions of the writers who have raised into public favour the hypothesis of man's remote antiquity, and animal descent, has been recently performed with great care by several distinguished hands. It is sufficient to mention a few of the best publications; the first by Dr. Southall, in his work, *The recent origin of Man*; the second and third by Vice-Chancellor Dawson, in his two works on the *Origin of the Earth and Man*, and on *Fossil Men*. The two ablest and briefest popular compendiums of these and similar arguments are perhaps the anonymous *Chapters on Genesis and Evolution*,* and the Rev. B. C. Young's *Remote Antiquity of Man not Proved*,† in which last exceedingly valuable and laborious work, Mr. Young has briefly exhibited, with chapter and verse for every statement, a picture of the assertions and changing inferences of so-called science of the last twenty years on these subjects, which will, perhaps, enable every one who studies it to breathe freely again over the questions of the book of Genesis and the Christian Revelation. Canon Rawlinson, possessed, perhaps, of as much archæological knowledge as any living Englishman, has approached the subject of human antiquity on the positive and historical side, and has shown, from that point of view, that there is just as little reason to doubt the recent origin of the Adamic race Genesis, as from the scientific point of view treated in the other works to which I have just referred. If theologians have sometimes been tempted, as is justly said, into

* Published by the Sunday School Union, 56, Old Bailey.

† Published by Mr. Stock, 63, Paternoster Row.

partiality of judgment by religious fears, it is at least equally certain that some students of natural history have of late been tempted into hasty conclusions on very insufficient evidence.

In the following lectures I shall consider (1), the general objections made chiefly on the basis of perversion and ridicule, against the credibility of the narrative of the creation, trial, and fall of Adam and Eve in Paradise; (2), and then the particular objections, to the mode of the formation of woman, to the form of the trial by one positive precept, to the incident of the reptile tempter, to the effect of the disobedience in the consciousness of sin and shame, in hard labour, and death; and finally, the grand objection, made on scientific grounds, to the curse on the serpent, which is first mis-stated, and then treated with derision. In the last lecture we shall consider the philosophy of the Hebrews on good and evil, in comparison with the ancient Asiatic Dualisms.

LECTURE II.

THE GENERAL OBJECTIONS URGED AGAINST THE TRUTH OF THE HISTORY OF THE FALL.

IN the former lecture I presented an exact statement of the place occupied in the Old and New Testaments by the narrative of the recent creation of man, and his fall from the hope of eternal life through disobedience to God. In a record of Divine Revelation professedly historical, and constituting an organic whole, not only does this narrative stand at the beginning of the history of mankind, but its importance increases with the successive stages of revelation. It is treated as historical truth by the Son of God Himself, and is made the basis of the doctrine of redemption by the apostles of the Gospel. We then presented a brief view of those ideas of our origin and nature which have recently gained a wide acceptance, and which arise from the doctrine of evolution taken in its application to man; showing that, in Dr. Martineau's words, they are totally irreconcilable with the Biblical doctrines of man's recent and direct creation in God's image, of the entrance of death by sin, and of redemption by the Incarnation. One or the other must be abandoned as untrue. Reference was then made to works of solid value, in which it is argued from evidence,

that the mistake lies with the believers in the "new book of Genesis," as Dr. Martineau terms it—not with the believers in the old one. The object contemplated in these lectures will not permit of the detailed presentation of the arguments by which these writers have proved that the new notions of the Remote Antiquity of Man and of his Animal Descent cannot be truly called scientific, that is, proved to be true, and therefore are to be regarded only as the opinions of some distinguished men of science, in which they are strongly opposed by other at least equally famous biologists and archæologists. For the arguments in question I must refer to the books previously named.

In what follows, declining any opinion on the evolution of animals, I must assume the validity of these arguments; and therefore the unshaken historical reality of the account of Man's Creation in Genesis. My present purpose is solely to consider the objections commonly urged against the truth and reality of the narrative of the Fall itself, chiefly by those who do not reject the general truth of Revelation.

For others, who go further in disbelief, who differ from us in their fundamental principles of thought, I fear that we can expect little advantage from the present study. Those of us who believe in God, in a God omnipresent, active, and morally governing the world, cannot be brought to agree in philosophy or faith, with men who think that there is probably nothing alive in this universe except themselves and the animals,—that beyond this planet there is no thought or sensation. Anything like an inclination towards atheism places a great gulf between itself and

those who believe in a living God,—and the narrative of Adam and Eve, explain it as you will, is not likely to prove a reconciling influence. We turn then to those who believe in God, and believe in some sense in Christ as the Son of God, but who find too many difficulties in Genesis to allow of their accepting as historical its opening narrative. Before considering any specific objections made to the historical reality of the account of man in Paradise, it is proper to notice two of a more general character, (1) that which arises from the highly supernatural quality of the story, and (2) the anthropomorphic (or manlike) views which it is said to give of the action of Deity. It is said that the details are contrary to all experience, that some of them are grotesque, and that the alleged interventions of God are worthy only of the most primitive and barbaric fancy. These objections, if valid, lie equally against, not only the whole Scripture history, but all notions of direct Divine action in Nature.

It is wonderful sometimes to listen to the objections to the supernatural Bible-history which are made by men who are well acquainted with the work of God in nature. The objection, if it means anything at all, means that you must not associate the idea of Deity with details in the universe, but only with universal laws; that to impute to God minute or definite acts of creation or providence, or to think of him as the “man in the next street” to use Dr. M. Arnold’s phrase, is to dishonour the idea of an eternal Cause. The notion seems to be that the Infinite mind can be occupied only with general and abstract ideas, and not with the detailed application of laws or forces; as

if these abstract and general ideas were anything more than the algebraic symbols required by the weakness of finite minds—or as if we could even conceive of an all-pervading intelligent Deity who did *not* see all general ideas in every one of their special applications, and, if He worked at all, worked in detail. Now let any man who believes in an intelligent Power behind nature, and working in nature—think of what we know of the interior economy of a spider's nest, an anthill, a bee-hive, as described by Lubbock and Romanes, and then tell us whether Creative Power is too great for details. Why, all natural history proves that God “taketh care” for animals down to the very animalculæ—in Christ's sublime language, that “not one of them is forgotten before Him.” There is no remedy for disbelief in Bible history, because of its details of divine action and interference, so effectual as study of Natural History both in animal and vegetable life. That a man shall trace out the marvels of the fertilisation of flowers, or the economy of ants and bees, and then find a difficulty in the books of Genesis or Leviticus as imputing too much detail to God, is surely to be very unreasonable and inconsistent. The Scripture requires us to believe in relation to man only what we cannot help believing in relation to insects, that some marvellous Intelligence is behind nature, and that *nothing* is too minute for its contrivance or care.

The objection to the supernatural element in the history of Paradise is but one specific example of a wider objection to the supernatural altogether, and lies equally against the whole recorded history of the Bible. Those who are

resolved to account for all things by the single action of natural causes will allow of no Divine direct agency whatsoever, and against these objectors it is idle to attempt to establish the truth of this particular supernatural history ; but those who admit the reality of Divine direct agency in the subsequent history of man, are to the last degree unreasonable in objecting to the record of such agency at its commencement. The Bible is one prolonged denial of the doctrine that a uniform course of nature is an adequate description of the history of this world. It is professedly a record, from first to last, of a series of direct interferences of God, both in creation and providence, supernatural, because the end to be attained was above law—the salvation of man—and this series of interferences becomes credible to the mind precisely in proportion as it is studied in connection with nature, studied as a whole, and studied in the light of its alleged object, the bestowment of eternal life on sinful and dying men. Assuredly the earlier chapters of Genesis are full, in every line, as was likely if man had a beginning in God, of statements of such direct Divine operations. In the first chapter we see Almighty God directly creating certain animals at the time of the creation of man. We see him directly creating woman “out of man,” the reverse of the subsequent order of nature. In the third chapter we see God placing man in the Paradise, under a special trial of his moral nature, arraigning him for disobedience, and then passing sentence on the Man, the Woman, and the Serpent-tempter. This style of writing is not peculiar to the opening pages of Moses. It continues to the end of the Bible—the asser-

tion of the direct, constant, minute, supernatural action of God in mercy and in judgment.

Now when such statements do not meet with the assent of faith, faith which discerns the truth even in the miracle, the counter-feeling which they raise is that of strong disbelief, and generally of ridicule, ridicule being the expression of the sense of incongruity and total incredibility. Accordingly the Bible is in our time either believed as a supernatural whole, or, quite logically, rejected and ridiculed as a whole. Nothing is easier than to ridicule the Bible by comparing it with common life. The more closely men study the uniformity of nature, and the ordinary course of events, the more will they be struck with the extraordinary quality of the miraculous record of Scripture; and, unless they have spiritual reasons for believing it, the more incongruous and ridiculous will it all appear. But such a sense of the ridiculous offers no solid basis of argument. Moreover, what is true outlives derision. Whatever is serious in purpose or aim, spiritual in feeling, and beautiful in form, vanquishes ridicule at last, even when the event is supernatural. The Bible, with all its miracles, has outlasted a hundred and fifty generations of scoffers; just as Christ's name has survived the derision of all the literati of Palestine, Greece, and Rome, who at first "laughed him to scorn" as a messenger of heaven.

Besides, some things which like this early narrative bear an insignificant appearance when judged by the eye, or by the first impression, possess a truly majestic importance when more closely examined, and judged by

the higher powers of the mind. I have been informed that when Queen Victoria slowly advanced in the procession of statesmen, and judges, and other notabilities of the realm, up the great hall of the new Palace of Justice, in her plain black dress, and with her *petite* figure, she seemed the most undistinguished person present in that splendid and illustrious assemblage. But when you came to think that that same undistinguished figure carried with it a spirit which is the living central force of the world-encircling empire of Britain, the living fountain of honour, the living representative of law, of administration, of naval and military rank and authority, over one-fifth of mankind—that in Her was made visible the descended authority and majesty of a hundred kings, the result of ages of conflict and progressive liberty; when you further remembered that beneath this outward form shone a Character earned by forty years of the most spotless and most triumphant integrity on the Throne, a well-tried character, before which Europe with its powerful nations, and Asia with its 800,000,000, and Africa with its dusky potentates, and America with its mighty republics, all bow with reverent affection, and even with enthusiasm—you felt that this is a world in which, if you always judge according to the appearance, you will not judge righteous judgment.

Just so it is, I think, with this narrative of the ancestors of mankind, Adam and Eve, in the book of Genesis. It has been through all ages, it is to-day, the object of unmeasured merciless ridicule to the unbelieving world. It has, of late, become also and equally the object of

contempt, when taken as a literal history, to persons professing themselves to be scientific Christians. We have heard that "conscience stands utterly aghast, and reason utterly revolted at the notion that a miraculously talking reptile persuaded an inconceivably constituted woman, a few thousands of years ago, to eat an actual apple, whereby men, women, and children of the nineteenth century are guilty and accursed in the sight of God." This is the old scoff expressed in modern language, with perversions borrowed from mediæval painting; and it is, in my opinion, a case of derision which itself tends to become ridiculous, immediately that you bestow on the grand old narration a serious reading. For we have here, in the third of Genesis, taken as historical, at least a succession of lofty and elevating ideas, which must at once redeem it from the contempt of thoughtful readers, even when regarded in its utmost literality.

It requires little candour to admit that *any* true account of the origin of mankind must be, in its circumstances, exceedingly unlike our modern development, and that to require similarity to our own experiences as the condition of belief in such an account is a sign of a somewhat narrow apprehension. Whatever theory of man's origin be adopted, the beginning must have been so unlike the ending that, if unlikeness to our own experience is to bring down ridicule, no theory can escape it. Even if the favourite notion be true that man originated in some collateral ancestor of the anthropoid apes or gorillas, it must have been a day of wonder in "the infinite azure of the past," when that black-faced, long-tailed, hairy

monster, recently described for us by Mr. Grant Allen, first thought and spake as a man ; and another day, much unlike our own, when this developed brute first stood upright, and found a half-rational help-meet in a similarly developed female anthropoid. If ridicule here is to be the test of truth, ridicule excited by unlikeness to modern experience, the story of Adam and Eve, glowing fresh in strength and beauty from the direct hand of God, will bear comparison with that of the infinitely slow development of this prognathous brute of pseudo-science ; whose fierce dull eye gradually gleamed with reason, and whose bellowsings and roarings, during the course of thousands of years spent amidst the post-glacial morasses and jungles (Dr. Max Muller says it is quite inconceivable), *gradually subsided into human speech*.* It is doubtless difficult, under any theory or any circumstances, to make the two opposite ends of the world believe in, or even understand each other. Adam and Eve, no doubt, appear at this distance in their naked beauty as mythical and poetic personages—to men of the nineteenth century ; and if some of our freethinking ladies and gentlemen of the present age could have been exhibited in vision to Adam and Eve, in their modern dress and style of speech and behaviour *they* would probably have regarded these persons as bad phantasms of

* Dr. Max Müller declares : "There is between the whole animal kingdom on the one side and man, even in his lowest state, on the other, a barrier which no animal has ever crossed, and that barrier is language. By no effort of the understanding, by no stretch of the imagination, can I explain to myself how language could have grown out of anything which animals possess, even if granted millions of years for that purpose."

the imagination, and would have rejected with scorn the idea that such strange fantastic beings could by any possibility be their descendants. They might even have fallen back, with some reason, upon the notion that they were allegorical personages, or even descendants of the fur-clad monsters of the woods. The evidence of dissimilarity presses on us on every side. The maddest of all hypotheses is that of inelastic uniformitarianism. Genesis the third may very well be true, even although it is much unlike a chapter in the modern history of London or Berlin.

I think, then, that we may well dismiss the objection that the Edenic narrative is too dissimilar to modern experience to allow of believing it, since *any* account of man's original is open to the same objection, and pre-eminently the pseudo-scientific, while in both cases the objection is futile.

A second difficulty which has been felt in the reception of the Edenic story as historical, is what is spoken of as *its childish tone*, in which the Almighty Creator is represented as working with his hands as a potter or sculptor; walking, talking, professing ignorance of the hiding-place of Adam: and then condemning His new-made creatures to death when tempted to make progress in intelligence by a speaking serpent. That is one way of putting the case. Now let us try the effect of another. This narrative presents a succession of the sublimest ideas of which the human mind is capable. The expression of them is indeed *childlike*, in the simplest language, language suit-

able to the childhood of the world ; but there is nothing *childish*, nothing unworthy of the faith of the manliest intelligence, and nothing unworthy of the Infinite Lord of Nature dealing with mankind in its beginnings. The Bible as a whole is credible and defensible, partly because it offers a history of humanity from its infancy to its mature age—the race having, as a matter of fact, passed through the stages of individual life from childhood to maturity ; so that the early portion of the Bible, professing to record revelations of God in the earliest stages of man's life, wins credibility from reflective readers, just because its opening pages are answerable in style to the opening ages of the world. Had they been less childlike in tone, they would have lacked one necessary note of genuineness in the adaptation of the Divine Father's voice to the early understanding of His sons. Besides, if we may form an idea of the character of the Divine Mind from the study of natural history, from the actual procedure of the Power which is behind nature in the production and management of his innumerable creatures, including insects, (and this is much likelier to be a true idea of God, than that which you gain from the string of abstract attributes, described in long Latin words, by St. Thomas Aquinas, or Pope Leo XIII.) it results that no conception that can be formed of God is farther from reality than that which represents Him as too great to attend to and delight in the management of little and elementary things. The one essential condition of intelligent intercourse between God and His rational creatures must be the coming down of the Creator to the level of His infant progeny.

The books of the nursery are indeed childlike in tone, but often embody the maturest wisdom; and no wise man dreams of deriding his own childhood, or of burning the library of his children's nursery. Judged by these canons, the histories of Genesis assume a place of high importance in the annals of the world. As a record of early religious literature, compared with the deciphered rubbish of Egypt and Chaldea, it is a pre-eminent example of the survival of the fittest.

Let us now point out some of the noble thoughts which underlie the Edenic story. 1. Here, then, first of all we find the sublimest possible conception of man's original. Man is Deiform, the image of the Infinite Being on earth, the direct creation of the Eternal Mind and Will. He is formed of the dust of the ground, *Adamah*, from which he takes his name of Adam, or *Earth*, dust and ashes, in the language of Abraham. He is formed as the last link in a series of animal lives, and on one side of his nature strongly resembles those beasts which perish. He belongs to the *Vertebrata*. His form has been typified and foretold in a long succession of old-world prophecies, in the structure of previous animals. But he does not spring from the earth, or from previous forms, as they did. He is specially fashioned by the Almighty Hand; God is represented as moulding him, working out in living art the eternal idea; and then as breathing into him, by direct afflatus of Divinity, the breath of life. In this luminous ancient page man does not appear as a developed animal, an evolution from anthropoids, the lineal descendant of brutal races—but, while akin to these in inward structure

of the body and mind, as possessed also of a higher nature, a nature resembling that of Deity—rational, moral, and royal ; a nature which gives him the power of tracing up all effects to the Eternal Cause ; of knowing his Maker, of communing with his God, of obeying and enjoying Him ; a being inhabiting both worlds, of matter and spirit, holding intimate relations with both time and eternity, with both earth and heaven. The seal of the living God, of the Infinite Life, is on his forehead, and though capable of dying, he is not made to die. There is no idea in the modern books on the *Descent of Man* so grand as this.

2. An equal splendour and originality characterises the relation of the creation of Woman. As if foreseeing the debasing gorilla-philosophy of the last days, here, in the very dawn of history, the strongest possible contradiction is given, while humanity was still in its beginning, to the notion of human derivation from the animals. “And the Lord God said, It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him an help-meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them. And Adam gave names to cattle, and to every beast of the field ; but for Adam *there was not found an help-meet for him.*” Man was not a “beast of the field,” no “beast’s heart was given to him,” therefore no modified anthropoid or simian could serve as his wife. For a modified gorilla, a modified simian would have served well enough. But Adam was of a Divine original, “made in God’s image,” and therefore Eve, in her glory and beauty, is the direct work of the Supreme Sculptor, Painter, Poet, and Life-

giver ; fashioning out of Adam himself the woman who should be one with him in life and love for ever and ever. Here is the strongest possible denial of the bestial original of humanity. He could not pair with the lower races, for his origin was directly from the sacred fount of Deity. He was "the Son of God."

The building up of the frame of Eve out of materials of bone and flesh taken from the entranced form of Adam, is only a specific difference under the general principle that living beings descend from each other, under the plastic agency of God ; and in this case the form of the action was specially fitted to lay the foundation of spiritual marriage, the only true human marriage, in the consciousness of their deep unity in Him. It is God who "joins together" man and woman in a unity which is no mere partnership or trading company with limited liability, but a unity consecrated by the bond of God's Spirit, and which, therefore, "no man may put asunder." The influence of this account of the creation of Eve was to throw a glorious light on womanhood through all the ages of the Patriarchal and Mosaic religions. It was a solemn protest, as Christ himself declares, at once against the gross bovine polygamy of the East, and the looser unions of harlotry. It consecrated woman as the daughter of the Lord God Almighty, it wrote "Holiness to the Lord" upon her forehead, and taught her for ever her true vocation as the Mother of the sons of God, and Man's helper in the service of heaven. Compare these ideas, as civilising and ennobling agencies, first with the incredible theories of recent years, that the mutual adaptation of the sexes in

all their intricate relations was the work of blind nature; and then that woman was a female development out of the hairy and tailed monsters of anthropoid type, meeting, in the darkness of a world without God, her unpredestined partner in brutality and death.

3. Next observe that the man and woman thus formed are designed for Immortal Life. Those who speak so confidently of the absence of the idea of immortality in the Old Testament, must have failed to note its earliest pages. So long as Adam abstained from the forbidden tree he is free to take of the tree of life, the effect of which is to cause him to "*live for ever.*" To take of one tree was death, but to take of the other was life eternal. What can convey more clearly the sublime idea that man was originally designed for a dependent but endless life in God. Its enjoyment depended on union with God by faith, but the original purpose of God was that man should never die—that his existence should run parallel with that of the Divine Being throughout eternity. Here surely is a conception beyond the shafts of ridicule even from extreme Evolutionists.

4. But if man is not a "beast of the field," and if a "beast's heart is not given him," neither is he here represented as an automaton. He is free, and is placed at once under the necessity of choosing between good and evil, truth and falsehood, right and wrong, God and self-will—in an immediate trial. This trial is ultimately to determine whether the higher or the lower nature shall rule, the spiritual nature which unites man with the Infinite God, or the lower nature which unites man only

with the creation by the attractions of sense and passion. This trial is represented as coming to the first man, as it comes to every one of us, in the earliest stage of our intelligence. The chief and determining trial of character is in childhood and youth. The trial of Adam was at the commencement of his history. He must, by a deliberate choice under temptation, against all lower seduction, declare his allegiance to the Eternal, as the condition of the endless life. It was a trial of faith, that is of intelligent voluntary choice of the Infinite Life and Perfection as Ruler and Lord, precisely in the same sense in which we are tried in the contest between faith and unbelief.

How could this faith be tested? The law of the ten commandments was, as Mr. Henry Rogers has pointed out in one of his memorable letters, inapplicable. The law of the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth commandments was unsuited to a creature who had but one single earthly relationship. There must, therefore, be appointed some positive external trial, by which the question of allegiance might be determined at once and for ever. The test selected was the taking of the fruit of a tree which was called the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, which was good for food, desirable to the eyes, and in some mysterious sense described as a "tree desirable to make one wise." This tree appealed, by its complex qualities, to the whole nature of man on its un-moral side, to the lower senses of taste and smell, to the sense of beauty, above all to his intellectual curiosity and ambition, as carrying with it some awful mystery of "knowledge of

good and evil," which should liberate him from dependence on the Creator's word—in fact from a life of faith in God. It was a test which brought out the whole strength of the two counter attractions by which their being was drawn in two opposite directions, towards God the Infinite, or away from Him. Between these two the choice must be made for eternity of loyal obedience, or of empirical rebellion.

And the lower attraction was supplemented by the permitted assistance of a living Tempter, enforcing the seduction of the inanimate object, since the rejection of animated evil was as much due to God as the rejection of the inanimate. In Adam's case, the still further fidelity was required of deafness to the voice of his wife, when she became an auxiliary to the seduction.

What is there of ridiculous in such a trial? It precisely resembles in its essence the trial to which every man in the world is still exposed—the trial of faith and fidelity to God, to right, to duty as against created forces of seduction. How shamefully is this lofty trial now misrepresented! Here is not the word of "an actual apple"—the fruit is not named; the material attractiveness is scarcely noticed, in the emphasis given to the intellectual attractions of the "tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil"—the temptation to know good and evil experimentally, apart from the will and word of the Creator. These perverse attempts to replace serious thought by ridicule are, I think, unworthy even of intelligent sceptics, much less of Christians. The tree by which they were tempted was no mere bait for the palate; it presented a mysterious appeal to all that was deepest within them—just as the modern

love of knowledge, when animated by a spirit of conceit and rebellion, offers the deepest temptation to the abandonment of God and religion by those who love truth and duty less than what they wrongly call science and freedom. It was a test of the root-principle of obedience to the Eternal Mind and Will, the prime condition of co-existence in eternity with God ; since such obedience of faith is, and must be in all worlds but the fulfilment of the primary law of created free agency. For pride is the sin through which "fell the Angels."

LECTURE III.

THE SENTENCES PRONOUNCED ON THE MAN, THE WOMAN, AND THE SERPENT-TEMPTER.

ONE of the legitimate methods of accounting for the supernatural history of the Bible is to suppose that it is literally true from the beginning. And one of the many methods of constructing a system of faith or a theology, is to take the facts and doctrines of the Bible in their simplest sense as a Divine Revelation, and to believe them. But both of these methods are now more out of favour than all others, and sometimes expose you to insult, even from Christian writers, more than the wildest rationalism. But surely in these days of scientific toleration, at least a friendly hearing might be conceded to a mode of dealing with Holy Scripture which is certainly the most ancient and the most natural, and which still seems the most reasonable to men furnished with at least as much ability, scientific knowledge, genius, and good faith, as the persons who are now deriding the book of Genesis, and subverting the faith of less instructed people.

In the previous lectures we have first presented a complete view of the place occupied in the Old and New Testaments by the history of Adam and Eve; and next a discussion of some general objections made to that history by scientific and literary criticism. Offering no judgment on the general doctrine of Evolution, we have, for reasons

assigned by Mr. Alfred Wallace and a host of scientific men, rejected its application to mankind, and affirm the direct action of God in the creation of man, first, because, if we may trust Professors Virchow, Dana, and Dawson, there is no clear evidence of the evolution of man from animals in the course of nature, accepted generally by scientific men; and, secondly, because the direct creation of man—of Adam as a historical person—is proved by all the complicated, miraculous, and recent evidence of Divine Revelation, which asserts it, and presupposes it in Redemption.

We now proceed to examine the narrative of the trial of Adam in Paradise on the side of its results, with a view to an opinion on its credibility when taken as a real history.

And, first of all, I observe that the narrative, as it stands in the book of Genesis, ought not to be made answerable at the bar of modern thought for the traditional accumulations which have gathered round it after thirty-four centuries of rabbinical and theological comment upon it. It is defensible as it stands in the primitive record; but, I admit, wholly indefensible and incredible as interlined by the additions of a later philosophy and tradition. Unhappily it is as thus interlined and perverted that it is popularly read and understood by a large fraction of Christendom, and it is in such a sense that it has been held up for derision in the presence of modern biological criticism.

On the face of the narrative as it stands we find only that, after other things set in order, and other living beings

created, "God made man of the dust of the ground in His own image, and breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a *living soul*." This last expression, applied in the Hebrew original hundreds of times to the animals, signifies only that man, animated by the Divine Spirit, became a "living creature." As Dr. Pye Smith declares, (in Kitto's Biblical Cyclopædia, under the article *Adam*) it most certainly was not intended to signify that Adam was created in possession of an indestructible life. On the contrary, being made "in God's image," he was a creature that might live for ever, if God so pleased; but he might also die and pass away, if he disobeyed his Maker. On the face of the narrative it appears plainly that, being created in the likeness of God, and allowed access to the "Tree of Life," he was originally *designed* for immortality—for life eternal; but it was conditional on the obedience of faith. If he transgressed he would "*die*." The object set before him, therefore, was to secure, by faith in God, an absolute possession of the eternal life for which God made him. If he departed from the Living God, and set up himself to be a self-determining power, to be "as God, knowing good and evil," he would "return to the dust whence he was taken." This is all that is in the narrative. The penalty of withdrawing from God was death—the *termination of his life*, (just as Death would have borne that meaning to him for all other living beings in the world), and with that, of course, the life of the unborn race which he represented. There is not a single word of that which occupies so large a space in theological systems since the

days of Augustine, not a word of Adam's destiny to suffer death *in three senses*, of which the last should take effect in an unseen world, a death which should be a deathless life of misery—much less one word of an hereditary curse of the same illimitable quality, and eternal in duration, to descend upon his infant posterity through the sins of their first ancestor; as when Augustine explicitly maintains the eternal suffering of unbaptized infants for Adam's sin. These additions of subsequent metaphysical and religious systems, unknown in the first two centuries of Christianity, we, with a host of ancient and modern theologians, altogether reject.

It is on such perversions as these, that the now popular accusation rests, that the narrative in Genesis requires you to admit that, because a "miraculously talking reptile persuaded an inconceivably constituted woman, six thousand years ago, to eat an actual apple, men, women, and children of the nineteenth century are accursed of God," that is, are liable, for Adam's sin, to the doom of endless misery in hell. The Power of darkness, who was so active in the temptation of Adam, seems, as an inspirer of perverse interpretations of Scripture, to have been equally active in suggesting false comments upon the record of the temptation. The old falsehood has been steadily repeated, age after age, "Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know" that the tree of knowledge is the tree of life, and man is deathless, quite apart from his conduct to his Maker. It is these unwritten traditions, widely held in Christendom, which now in their results are making void the revelation of God in Christ for the modern world.

If you persist in foisting into the narrative of the fall of man the devil's psychology concerning Adam's nature and destiny, and with it the atrocious doctrine of an hereditary immortality of sin and misery for Adam's infant posterity as the legal consequence of his transgression, and make this the foundation of Christianity, as the old Greek and Latin theologians have done, then men will first declare, as we now hear, that the narrative in Genesis is an old world fable, and next they will logically reject the teaching of Christ and His apostles, who build Redemption itself upon that narrative as a literal history. Let us not deceive ourselves, gentlemen; the logical and necessary alternative now is to accept the Bible pretty much as it stands, apart from the direr specialities of the Augustinian theology—or Infidelity, descending steadily to Atheism; for it has come to that at last, as has long been foreseen by many.

There is surely nothing irrational or absurd in the idea of the creation of a being holding relations with both earth and heaven, both with the animal world and with the Creator, and placed on his trial to determine his destiny, either to ascend into the rank of permanent existences through spiritual union with God by faith, or to descend to the rank of transitory creatures who were incapable of knowing and loving the Creator. And this is all that appears on the face of the narrative, or from any subsequent revelation. The Holy of Holies represented the lost Paradise.

If now we examine closely the history of the consequences resulting from the disobedience of our first parents,

through whom it is falsely said that we have become "guilty and accursed of God," it is seen at once, as was pointed out seventeen centuries ago by Irenæus, the scholar of Polycarp, the disciple of St. John the divine, in his second book on Heresies, that God pronounced no curse whatever on Adam or on Eve after their transgression, much less on their posterity. It is said that God "cursed the *ground* for Adam's sake," cursed it with comparative sterility, so as to demand extraordinary toil in its cultivation. The lightning passed from the head of Adam to the soil, whence he should draw his sustenance. Similarly, there is no single word of a "curse" pronounced on Eve. The life-penalty of her offence was sorrow in child-bearing; but child-bearing itself was a blessing, not a curse. The curse turned aside from her, also, and descended on the Serpent-deceiver. The Ground and the Serpent were accursed, but not Adam and Eve. They were both to undergo the death-penalty, and to "return to the dust whence they were taken," and thus were "constituted sinners;" but first, the penalty was deferred, and, secondly, in the very act of sentencing them to death, God spake a word of hope and restoration through the "seed of the woman." And then it was that Adam called his wife by a new name, EVAH, or LIFE, because she was to be the mother of a world of living beings, which would never have existed but for the promised "Seed of the woman," and the suspension of the sentence. Their continued life was itself a sign of the pardoning mercy of God, abstaining from the infliction of the threatening that "*in the day*" of their transgressions they should "surely

die." The postponement of death rendered possible the existence of mankind, and the birth of their Deliverer who should "crush the serpent's head."

Thus there is not an inch of standing ground in the narrative for the pretence that it represents "men, women, and children of the nineteenth century as *guilty and accursed of God*," in the Augustinian sense, because a "miraculously talking reptile persuaded an inconceivably constituted woman to take an actual apple six thousand years ago." Such criticism, however sincere, is not only false, but, I submit, pernicious in the highest degree, as secretly undermining the foundations of popular faith in the revelation of redemption, and in that Covenant of mercy under which, and not under a curse, mankind is born into the world.

If, next, we turn to consider the results of the transgression recorded in the Genesis-fragment, probably of antedeluvian antiquity, we find, first of all a statement that the sense of *Shame in Nakedness* entered into the human world with sin, and as the effect of it. Few features in the narrative have been more steadily derided than this, that both man and woman were created in a state of nakedness, and that the sense of outward shame began only with the sense of transgression, leading to the first attempt at imperfect clothing. No ridicule has been more inconsiderate and superficial. The account given in Genesis is at least a striking solution of a problem under atheistic views hopelessly insoluble. Think of it. The whole world of living creatures is either unclothed, or, if

dressed in plumage or fur, is so dressed by nature for protection from the weather, or for flight, or for beauty, and not as a remedy for any shame at exposure of the body or any part of it. There is no trace of this feeling in the animal world throughout all its ranks. Even our nearest analogues, the most unsightly anthropoids, are destitute of any similar instinct of self-concealment. The majestic form of Man in its normal development, the beautiful form of Woman, are the transcendent works of the supreme Artificer, the supreme Sculptor, the supreme Painter. Human art has followed these achievements for ages, in the Vatican Apollo, in the Venus of Milo, in the paintings of Titian, in limping imitation of a perfection of form and colour whose living glory no work in marble or on canvas can equal.

Whence the irresistible instinct through which the most noble and beautiful forms in the whole world clothe themselves from view, just in proportion as culture and civilisation render them more majestic and more beautiful? and in a world where all the rest of animated nature is "naked, and is not ashamed"? The fact is indisputable. Not the most infidel or the most beautiful nation in Europe, in its finest, warmest climate, could possibly venture to live one day absolutely unclothed. Absolute public nudity is itself a synonym for disgrace and shameless vice in all nations and ages. Even the half nakedness of modern fashion, and of theatrical display is condemned by the public conscience. Let those who ridicule the narrative in Genesis be pleased to give us some account of this phenomenon. Clothing is not merely for warmth, for the

fact of shame remains in the sunniest lands; and when savages in hot countries are raised to a higher level of intelligence, they clothe themselves anew, by a revived instinct, just as do Europeans or Asiatics. Will anyone assign a more rational account of this extraordinary exception to the rule of nature among living creatures than this—that the sense of shame in nakedness, the outward crimson blush at exposure of the person, the impulse to hide and cover, entered with sin, with sin of a crimson dye, entered when the ancestors of the race had cause to be inwardly ashamed of themselves; and that this sense of shame is the perpetual mark of the truth of this narrative; just as the tremendous and abnormal toils of mankind regarded as a historic whole, and the still more tremendous and thoroughly exceptional infliction denounced on woman—however varying with climate—equally confirm our faith in the Mosaic account of the circumstances attending the first origin of our race and nature.

We now arrive at the last point in the history—the *temptation by the Serpent*. So heavily has the difficulty been felt of what is called this “miraculously talking reptile,” that I suppose the prevailing mode of explaining this incident in the history of the Fall, even by those who do not reject the historical reality of Adam and Eve, is by resorting to the notion that there was no serpent at all concerned in the transaction, any more than in Christ’s temptation by the devil; but that this reptile name was assigned allegorically to an invisible spirit, who did not in any way appear, but who enforced the temptation presented

by the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil by his murderous suggestions. There is no doubt that under this view the essential elements of the narrative may be preserved intact, and the foundation of Christian faith remain unshaken, against the assaults of honest unbelievers. But, after paying the utmost attention to these allegorical hypotheses of interpretation, I confess that I follow the majestic intelligence of Milton, rather than modern critics, in thinking that a deeper study of the case will enable and compel us to hold fast to the literal and natural interpretation here also. But I frankly admit that we do not expect to persuade any one to adopt this old-fashioned conclusion who does not accept the following premisses as a basis of argument.

1. That the narrative, as a whole, in Genesis iii., of the recent creation and trial of Adam in Paradise, is a true story, contradicted by nothing that is really ascertained by modern science—and that there is no more reason *a priori* for converting into an allegory one part of the narrative than the other.

2. That it is necessary, in order to do justice to any part of the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments, to bring the light thrown by the Bible as a whole, as a record of the work of God, on to each special portion of it. I am prepared to defend the Bible as a whole, as the record of a divine revelation concerning the history, state, and destiny of man—but I cannot thoroughly defend, apart from the whole of the Bible, any single portion of it. Just as the study of the solar system as a whole persuades me of this truth, which the senses cannot discern, that the

earth is a globe and one of the planets, and moves round the sun as a centre with other sister worlds; so I can rationally defend the whole Bible, if I believe in the connected series of its revelations, but not otherwise.

3. The third premiss or basis of argument on which I proceed, therefore, is the acceptance of the mysterious Scripture doctrine of fallen angels, with one mighty adversary of truth and right at the head of them, the mortal enemy of mankind and the permitted tempter for a short season of the servants of God.

Grant these three premisses, and I think we can defend victoriously the history of the serpent in Genesis. Apart from these premisses we must abandon the story to the allegorisers, at least in this particular.

I consider then the account of the action of the serpent in two aspects, first as it would have appeared to Adam and Eve, and then in the light thrown upon it by subsequent revelations.

I. It is on the face of the narrative that Eve, on hearing the serpent speak, suspected no hostile agency, and regarded the power of speech only as the newly-discovered faculty of a creature already noted for its intelligence. Mr. Romanes, in his charming book of the *Animal Intelligence*, tells wonderful and well-authenticated stories of the intelligence, and even affection, of the non-poisonous order of boa-constrictors and pythons, which have been trained by English ladies to come at their call, to fold gently their mighty forms around the persons of entertainers, and to give and receive marks of affection in perfect amity. Sir Emerson Tennant adds, that in Ceylon, even the poison-

ous and deadly cobra (the *Naja* of India, whose Sanskrit name was believed by the late learned Mr. Cooper to recall the root of the Semitic *Nachash* of Genesis) is trained as a protector in place of dogs, by wealthy natives—to glide about the house, a terror to thieves, but never harming the inmates.” (Romanes, p. 265.)

If Eve had heard any of the parrot kind imitating speech, the wonder at the speech of so intelligent an animal as the serpent would have been less. Both Adam and Eve were new to nature; they were not philosophers, and through inexperience could not tell what phenomena might not appear in the wonderful creatures by whom they were surrounded. What must have been clear to her mind was that no animal seduction, hostile to the command of their common Maker, ought to weigh for a moment against the authority of God. The suasion of the intelligent serpent increased the force of the temptation presented by the mysterious tree, whose fruit would impart a certain lofty sort of wisdom or knowledge; but this only doubled the pull of the attraction on her lower nature, on her senses, her curiosity, her wish for independent knowledge, while the higher nature within her was still drawn in the opposite direction by her duty to her husband and to her God. It was choice on the wrong side between two powerful attractions—for minds, like worlds, are placed between two forces. As is usual with sinners, she laid the blame afterwards on the temptation. This was only the first example on earth of the general law in all worlds, that a free agent, serving God, must resist when tempted to disobedience, even the attraction of the universe; and

obedience under such temptation is more precious to God than any other form of character in the creation. It is tried character—"the trial of faith"—which we value, and which our Maker values so highly; trustworthiness, based on the fixed loyalty of truth and love.

II. Now, if we look at this narrative in the light of the later revelations of Scripture, what do we discover there?

First, we find everywhere in the New Testament, not only the general doctrine that God's servants on earth are compelled to accept a combat with "principalities and powers in heavenly places," with a "power of darkness," a "power of the air," against which they are to "wrestle and pray;" a power secret and unseen, acting from an ambush, and ready to deceive and mislead, and lead to death all who will not watch against temptation, and "resist, steadfast in the faith;" but we are assured by Christ and his Apostles, speaking in God's name, that this was the same power which lay hid beneath the serpent in Paradise.*

Christ Himself is represented by two of the Evangelists as being tempted at the beginning of His work, or tried "by the devil" in the same three directions in which Adam and Eve were tempted—through the appetite, through the imagination, and through the lust of ambition and independence. Christ declares in the plainest language that the Devil, whom he terms "the Father" of the Scribes and Pharisees, was a "*man-killer* from the begin-

* This subject I have discussed fully in my work on "Life in Christ," chap. xii.

ning, and a liar," obviously referring to this narrative in Genesis, and identifying Satan with the Serpent. St. John, in the Apocalypse, speaks twice of "the Devil and Satan" as the "*Ancient Serpent*"—still more distinctly teaching that the act and speech of the Serpent was inspired by a mightier Power, who sought to take away the eternal life of man, to hinder him from attaining an immortality of life and glory.

Again, I fall back on Scripture history, taken literally as it stands, for a precedent which confirms my faith in the literal narrative. Thrice in the Evangelical history, —in SS. Matthew, Mark, and Luke—there appears a wonderful account of the expulsion of *daimonia*, or evil spirits from possessed men, who lived in restraint and hideous misery among the tombs of Gadara, crying and shrieking night and day. That they were evil spirits is clear from their awful question to the Son of God, "Art Thou come hither to torment us *before the time*," indicating their knowledge that a certain time was fixed, so many ages hence, when they are to undergo the damnation of hell, everlasting destruction by the hand of Christ, the queller of the Power of Darkness. Those numerous spirits (a legion) prayed him not to send them out—*i.e.*, of the world, "into the deep"—*i.e.*, the Abyss, or bottomless pit. They further asked leave to "enter into the vast herd of swine feeding on the mountains." It is said, "*Then He suffered them.*" Now such things are wholly beyond the range of ordinary experience, but for one I believe this history, thrice persistently asserted by the evangelists; and it proves that the almost universally

diffused notion of transmigration of departed souls and spirits, (if Josephus is right these *daimonia* were held by the Jews to be the departed souls of wicked men,) was not so wholly contrary to fact as most have supposed. We do not yet know all the facts respecting the animals and their relations to the spiritual world. Perhaps there are some mysteries as yet unstudied by biologists in the connection between that spiritual world and animated nature.

But my object in referring to the Gospel narrative here is to show to believers in the New Testament that if a number of evil spirits once entered into swine, similar events may have occurred before, and that hence it is not so wholly incredible that much earlier a mighty evil Spirit, when no other mode of man-killing was possible or permitted, entered into a splendid Serpent, in order to deceive the first woman, and to achieve, through her, the destruction of mankind.

Later on we read, in St. John's Gospel, xiii. 27, that this same Satan, "after the sop, *entered into Judas*"—language quite distinct from the earlier words, "Satan having now *put it into the heart* of Judas to betray him," and marking some more direct possession and incarnation after that audacious, "*Lord, is it I?*" For when Gethsemane was reached, Christ attributed the treachery of Judas to the "coming of the Prince of this world"—"the Prince of this world approacheth," just as he had said still earlier, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is *Diabolos?*" (John vi. 70.)

On these grounds, then, I do not find so insuperable a

difficulty as some Christians do in believing that the action and speech of the serpent in Genesis were real, supernatural, and diabolical.

Next, I suppose no one who admits the existence of Satan, and of the lying wonders which are attributed to his agency in the Bible, will doubt that it may have been within the compass of archangelic power to produce vocal sounds from the unfit mouth even of a serpent. Much more astonishing things have occurred through, I believe, inferior demonic power, in our own day, among the necromancers and spiritualists, if we are to give credit to such careful and practised witnesses as Mr. W. Crookes, F.R.S., Mr. Alfred Wallace, F.R.S., and many others. But on this argument, since the facts are disputed, I rest nothing.

But now you will ask, "Granting all that can fairly be said of evil spirits, and the possibility of their animal and human incarnations, what conceivable account can be given of this entering specially into a *serpent*? Temptation in human form, or even through one of the nobler animals, would be much more credible."

That is one hypothesis. Now, here I can only offer another hypothesis; but, I think, one strong enough to overbalance the opinion that no such event can have occurred. Suppose it be true, as is laid down uniformly in Scripture, that although man is tempted by the envious evil power who receives permission to try his faith, this whole process of trial is, in all its details, under the *strictest Divine limitation and control*, so that Satan can, neither by himself, nor by angels, nor by his human agents, go one step further than God "suffers them." Suppose it

be true that God will permit no well-disposed person to be “tempted above what he is able to bear;” suppose, as in the dramatic history of Job, revealing ancient beliefs, Satanic power is never allowed to advance beyond the line dictated by a merciful regard to man’s infirmity, and that each trial is regulated and limited by the Divine knowledge of an honest soul’s resources of resistance. Suppose that this law was applied to the temptation of our newly created first parents; and that, in their youthful and inexperienced state, knowing nothing of the history of the universe, or of the fall of angels, or the purpose of God, it was forbidden to Satan to assail their life or tempt them *in the form of an equal or a superior*, so that the permission to tempt was limited by the most humiliating condition—that the temptation must come, if at all, through the apparent action of one of those undeveloped and inferior animals which sported around them. Under such conditions the action of the murderous adversary becomes, at least, more intelligible. They were placed midway between the animals and their God, on trial for life eternal, or for a death like that which reigned over the perishable creatures of the earth. All Nature beneath them, animate or inanimate, might appeal to their senses, their imagination, even their understanding and their faith, against God; but they were bound to obey Him whom they knew—the Creator of all things. To listen to any inferior teaching could not be right, and must be fatal. Satan had permission, then, I suppose, to do his worst, under the miserable condition of adding the temptation which a reptile, become vocal, could offer to that of the

forbidden tree in Paradise, little dreaming that in thus lowering himself, and descending, with murderous intent, to blot out their lives from the creation, he was entangling himself in a complication of defeat, through which evil would be crushed for ever, and Man raised, by "the Seed of the woman," to the government of the universe and life everlasting.

It may be that Satan is one of the oldest beings in the Universe, one who has lived and thought longest through numberless ages ; to whom, therefore, the condition and necessary law of child-like faith in God's word, to be continued for ever, has become a burden, and tempted him to his ruin. It may be that we have here the Oldest of intelligences become rebellious, striving through envy to destroy one of the youngest and simplest of beings, by assailing this very principle of faith in God. The history of man in Paradise, I suspect, has quite as much to do with a more ancient conflict between good and evil as with this world and its destinies. "The principalities and powers in the heavenly places are learning" here ; so that the phrase, the "Ancient Serpent," perhaps carries at once a biographical reference and a contemptuous record of the meanest of incarnations for an evil end. And, further, we may suspect that this seemingly incredible narrative of the Serpent's guile contains the history of a crisis in the establishment of God's sovereignty over "principalities and powers in heavenly places." A great king will sometimes lay a terribly humiliating trap to catch and to castigate a powerful and traitorous offender.

But you will ask, last of all, What reasonable explanation can possibly be given of the alleged curse on the Serpent—“*On thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.*” Professor Huxley has sometimes said, in former years, to his pupils at Jermyn-street, “Serpents have in all ages of the world, so far as I know, gone upon their bellies; yet in the Book of Genesis it seems as if at least an early specimen once went erect, a thing unknown before; and he was punished by being reduced to creep and crawl for ever, on the general plan of the ophidia.”

Professor Huxley has an excellent defence for his sardonic gloss, in the example of some Christian commentators, who have alleged this to be the meaning of the divine curse on the serpent. But there is not a word in the narrative supporting such a notion. Suppose we take the history thus, and offer an explanation in the terms following to the Evolutionists and Palæontologists, which from their point of view will, I think, be acknowledged to be more credible, because more consonant to the facts.—“Gentlemen, you have taught us as the result of your studies of animal nature, of which we all alike are proud, that the probable doctrine—at least over large areas of life—is that of the evolution of species, the one from the other, through all past history. You have taught us that the class of reptiles filling up the space between fishes and birds has in past ages, and in the existing world, contained nine orders, of which four are now existing, and five are extinct, having left their fossil remains in the sedimentary rocks below. These all you believe to have gradually

descended from each other, or from other ancestors, in the course of illimitable time, rising, and sometimes falling and sinking in the scale of nature; for there are arrested developments and even degraded types.

“The five extinct classes of reptiles are denominated:—

1. *Ichthyo-pterygia*; 2. *Sauro-pterygia*; 3. *Ptero-sauria*; 4. *Anomodontia*; 5. *Deino-sauria*—all of them confined to the secondary period of geology, all of them marine or amphibious monsters, and all of them furnished with powerful organs for locomotion in the water, on the land, or in the air—paddles, feet, or wings.

“The four orders of reptiles now existing are:—1. *Chelonia*, or turtles and tortoises; 2. *Ophidia*, snakes; 3. *Lacertilia*, lizards; 4. *Crocodylia*, crocodiles.

“Among these nine orders of reptiles, one order alone—that of Serpents—is, and always has been, through all past ages, wingless, finless, footless. The germs of hinder legs are concealed in some few kinds of serpents, as in the boa-constrictor, enough to show their relationship with the eight other orders of limbed reptiles, which fill up the space between fishes and birds.

“Now of you, gentlemen, as evolutionists, I as an expositor of Scripture respectfully ask;—‘Supposing this curse on the serpent was really uttered by the Author of nature, by a living God, who knew all past history, and all anatomy, and therefore knew the strange *abnormal* history of the serpent order, through all its generations up till then—that is, knew the history of the one reptile order which alone among nine never developed its limbs, or any of the organs of locomotion which belong to all the other

eight, since the Permian epoch ; and supposing, as I must ask you to suppose for the sake of argument, this narrative of man's trial in Paradise, as explained in the later portions of the Bible, were true, so that the Serpent was the organ of a brighter but viler Intelligence—I put it to you, Evolutionists—Would it be utterly irrational to take the words of the Supreme Judge thus, speaking first to the serpent, but more profoundly to the evil power which had sunk so low as to employ this reptile form ?—‘ Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field. Upon thy belly *hast thou gone* from the days of old, the one undeveloped, crawling, limbless reptile among all the kindred orders above thee and beneath thee ! And on thy belly *shalt thou go* all the days of thy life, so long as the world shall last ; no higher development awaits thee, no evolution into a nobler type ; but still carrying the marks, in thy unborn hinder limbs, of a better kinship thou shalt go on hissing, crawling, poisoning the world, hateful and hated, striking man's heel, yet punished by his enmity, until the time comes when thou shalt be added to the already extinct orders of reptiles, and the ‘ woman's Seed,’ destined to endless duration, shall bruise thee out of the creation.’

Such a meaning, I think, might have been conveyed in full biological truth by such a Divine Speaker to such a serpent. Here would be no implication of his being reduced from a previous higher form to a limbless creeper, but *a sentence of continued crawling* on the ground, without any hope of evolution into a noble development. And, on the supposition that the typical serpent-form concealed

some mighty Spirit of evil, the antagonist of human life, how awful the deeper enigmatical meaning of the words of the Judge, not understood by the fallen pair, but understood well enough by the object of the curse ;—‘ Origin of evil ! thou hast sunk so low from thy once heavenly brightness—so low in envy, spite, and murder, as willingly to take even a reptile form, and that form the hatefullest, to reach thy end. Crawl then, Spirit of Darkness, to the end of thy days, and ‘lick the dust’ with all the enemies of sunlight and righteousness. For evil is not noble, and is not eternal, and has no future evolution into greatness and victory. Thou thoughtest to devour this man of ‘dust’ in thy abhorred embrace, but thy malice shall be defeated, thy victim shall be rescued from thy fangs—man shall attain to the life immortal ; the Seed of the woman shall crush thy head, and the dust of death ‘shall be the serpent’s meat.’ God shall bruise thee and thy seed under man’s feet shortly.’

I submit that neither in relation to the animal, nor the spiritual worlds, which are typically related, were such ideas—so understood—unworthy of the Ruler of the universe ; and taken in this sense they accord both with the physical history of the reptile-instrument of Satan, and with the reptile history of Sin, regarded as a rebellion against eternal Righteousness and eternal Love.

LECTURE IV.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE HEBREWS ON GOOD AND EVIL, COMPARED WITH ASIATIC DUALISM.

In the first lecture of this series, I drew attention to the place which the narrative of Adam in Paradise occupies in the Bible—at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. The Christianity of Christ and His apostles is built upon it. In the second lecture, we considered the general objections made to the historical reality of this narrative; and, in the third lecture, the alleged results of the transgression, and the sentences passed on the man, the woman, and the serpent-tempter.

We are now to consider “the hidden wisdom” or philosophy of the history, the import of the promise that “the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head”—words whose meaning cannot fully appear until we have made apparent the place which the doctrine of good and evil, developed in the Hebrew Scriptures, occupied amidst the dualistic religions and philosophies of the ancient world; a brief review, which will, perhaps, result in confirming men’s faith in the general reality of this narrative.

As far back as written or pictorial history carries us in Egypt, in Persia, in India, and in China, the evil power has been represented as a personal being in the form of a serpent or dragon, with flashing eyes, and often with flaming breath. In a paper read by the late Mr. W. R.

Cooper, secretary of the Society of Biblical Archæology, the whole lore of Asia and Egypt on serpent-worship was condensed into one wonderful monograph by that lamented scholar.

It thence appears clearly that in ages preceding the times of Moses by at least a thousand years the evil power which has ruined the work of the supreme goodness was represented all over the world by the name of the Serpent.

In the very earliest epoch of the Egyptian monarchy, there is evidence that the legend of Osiris was firmly established, of which the essence was that this son of the supreme god was put to death by the poisonous serpent, from the effects of whose murderous attack he is delivered by resurrection, and final enthronement in the celestial realms. The same idea is found in ancient India, in the redemptive story of Krishna, who is depicted as setting his foot on the serpent's head. Moses, therefore, has recorded, in the narrative of the fall of man, a history which had much earlier diffused itself over the post-diluvian world, in more or less corrupted traditions. In a word, the universal traditions of mankind confirm, even amidst their fanciful variations, the record which stands at the beginning of Genesis, as all subsequent revelation confirms the original reality whence those traditions sprang.

But there is this difference between the beliefs of the whole civilised world in ancient times and the doctrine of the Hebrew religion, that, without exception, the heathen worshippers *deified* evil as well as good, and regarded it as engaged in an eternal and often successful conflict with a

God of goodness ; while, from one end to the other of the Mosaic and Christian revelations, evil is represented as an incident, vanishing and temporary, in the everlasting dominion of supreme righteousness and love, a conviction which imparted a wholly new aspect both to religious worship and to religious character.

This difference has received too little attention from the superficial critics of the Mosaic writings.

Now this faith of Israel, which made head through so many ages against all the intelligence of Egypt and Persia, India and Babylon, that is, against the thinking of the whole civilised world of antiquity, this faith so distinct, so potent, so sublimely triumphant and persistent in the seers and prophets of Judaism, can surely never have been founded on a mere philosophical myth, a symbolic fable, a hieroglyphic, an antediluvian fancy. It bears all the marks of being founded on fact, on real history, a history so real and true from the beginning, that it shattered at a blow the might of Dualism, or the worship of Two Principles, among the Hebrews, and enabled the adorers of Jehovah to maintain, with confident voice against the whole pagan world, that evil was recent, personal in its origin, limited in its power, and destined to be trodden under foot shortly by the "Seed of the Woman" who should bruise the serpent's head.

The place and value of the Hebrew revelation in the systems of Asiatic thought will appear the more clearly if we picture to ourselves the earlier movements of the human mind in contemplating the mystery of life, where natural speculation was unaided by light from heaven.

Let us endeavour to throw ourselves backward in fancy to that early time when the knowledge of the true God had been lost amidst growing heathenism. How would thoughtful men attempt under such conditions to solve the problem of the world? Clearly there would emerge in succession two leading explanations of this scene of mingled good and evil, moral and physical, in which chaotic darkness seems struggling with the light and order which could create a kosmos. Of these, the first and the more ancient was the Dualistic, based on faith in spiritual powers; the second and more recent was the Sceptical, or Buddhistic, based on scientific observation of things visible, and the positive rejection of Divine causes in accounting for the state of the world.

The earliest step downwards from the patriarchal religion (which acknowledged one God, and traced up the origin of evil to the rebellion of created free agency) was into dualism, or the exaltation of evil to the rank of a divine power coeval with the good. To us, long accustomed to the spectacle of partially-conquered evil, and the faith of its speedy and complete overthrow, it is difficult to imagine the state of thought which found a solution of the great problem in the faith of a bad divinity dividing with a good One the lordship of the universe. Yet there was much to excuse and account for such a theory. Evil had, indeed, a mighty dominion in the early world. A vast expanse of countries torn and flooded by ungovernable rivers, an earth often afflicted with famines, pestilences walking in darkness, earthquakes suddenly overturning the central seats of order and government, a sun too hot,

a sky too turbulent and humid, diseases of direful aspect and endless variety, an animal world partly wild and partly venomous, a human population with passions which, in spite of the inward light of reason, kept the nations in perpetual war and perpetual woe, government which through its oppressions seemed only just preferable to the sanguinary anarchy which it controlled—all these phenomena looked to the early men like the work of an evil power unseen, strong enough to defy and defeat the designs of the benificent Deity which nature also proclaimed. If in our time a mind so great as Mr. John Stuart Mill could, in his latest works, indicate some tendency to this solution of the mystery, is it to be wondered at if men, whose philosophy was primitive and tentative, found an easy if terrible resource in such a doctrine? If, further, they started from a primitive tradition of personal evil agency in the supernatural sphere, it was inevitable that the idea of an evil demon should be aggrandised into the idea of an evil deity. Of this early dualism several things must be noted.

Its essential identity of principle must not be lost sight of under varying forms of expression. Its reign extended over all Central Asia and India and China in the ages preceding the Buddhistic "reform." The idea which underlies the dogma of the Hindoo triad is essentially dualistic. There is Brahma, the Good Being; and there is Siva, the Destroyer. Vishnoo is the good power acting redemptively by incarnation to deliver the earth from evil. This faith is radically the same with the Zoroastrian theology of early Persia and mid-Asia, which taught that

Ormuzd and Ahriman, light and darkness, divided nature between them.

The relative prominence given in different ages and countries respectively to the good or the evil powers was determined by the physical, intellectual, and moral conditions of the nations who embraced the general doctrine. The inevitable tendency of dualism among ignorant nations in a state of suffering is towards religious pessimism—the special service of the malignant deity, in order to propitiate him by atrocious rites, or to ward off his injuries. The beneficent power will no doubt endure neglect, but hatred is inexorable. Hence the Moloch workshop, of Syria, the devil-worship of Asia, of which some awful relics survive even to this day among the far descended aboriginies of Ceylon. Hence, too, the remarkable fact that although the Medo-Persian dualism, as organised by Zerduscht in a remote antiquity, gave the supremacy to Ormuzd, the Eternal Light, in the course of ages of conflict the popular mind, acted upon by terror and misery, by superstition and magian priestcraft, had by the time of Cyrus, arrived at so complete a prostration under the shadow of the power of darkness, whose secrets the magians professed to know, that much of the territory had been abandoned to sterility from a conviction that it was useless to fight with destiny, an enemy who was omnipotent and eternal. With the reviving fortunes of the people under the bright and energetic rule of the Medo-Persian kings, and very probably through the diffusion of Hebrew ideas in the East, a more luminous faith returned to the nation. A profound

theological revolution signalised the reign of Darius Hystaspes, the final result of the happy victories of Cyrus. Darius records it in the famous triumphal inscription on the rocks of Behistun. He asserts that he has overthrown the Magians, for ages leagued with Ahriman, and declares that Ahuramasda or Ormuzd is King. It was as great a revolution as if Satan had been worshipped in terror for ages in England, and then suddenly a political revolution had revived the worship of God. In the more ancient sculptures of Nineveh and Persepolis abundant memorials occur of the varying types of dualism. In every better period of these monarchies the king is represented as under the protection of the beneficent deity, depicted as a winged human form surrounded by the wheel of nature, while the evil power symbolised by a dragon is portrayed only in a form of subjection or comparative defeat.*

With these brief historical indications in view, it is easier to estimate aright the value of the original Hebrew monotheism and of its successive dispersions, as factors in ancient Asiatic thought. At a time when India was dimly striving to uphold faith in a beneficent Deity against a malignant energy which was itself divine; at a time when Zerduscht, in Central Asia, was more vigorously maintaining the same faith against a popular superstition which was ever darkening into the direful worship of Ahriman, Moses and the sons of Israel were maintaining at once against Egyptian polytheism and against all the might of Eastern

* See some interesting descriptions of this revolution in the article on *Philosophy*, chap. v., in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*; attributed to the late Rev. Frederick Denison Maurice, M.A.

dualism, the existence and supreme sovereignty of one living and true God, the Almighty, the just, the merciful ; in whose government Evil was a possible, perhaps, inevitable, incident, arising from the defect of the creature's free-will, or the slothfulness of the creature's intelligence, but which had *no root in the nature of things*. During all these ages Israel was proclaiming the final and speedy victory of Eternal Light through its redeeming righteousness and love. We shall never read the Hebrew Revelation rightly until we remember the "thick darkness" in which its glorious lustre shone. From first to last, through 1,500 years it speaks with undaunted voice of the One God ; of the reptile inferiority of the evil power ; of the certainty of its final subjection under the heel of the great King whom Omnipotence would send for its suppression in the latter days. This is the burden at once of the book of Genesis and of the Psalms of David. This is the key-note of prophecy. This is the force of Isaiah's declaration to Cyrus, the yet unborn conqueror of Babylon ; that evil as a power is not divine, is not eternal, and existing only as permitted for higher ends of good in the sovereignty of One, who, "seeing under the whole heaven," and pervading all space by His Omniscience, affirms that He "knows not any God beside Himself" throughout the infinite realms.

It is this idea of the Infinite as one living eternal personality which has bound the Jewish race together by the sublimest of spiritual ties from first to last. They were monotheists when Egypt, in the times of Amenophis and Aahmes, were bowing down before a Pantheon of gods

and goddesses—symbolised by oxen, by beetles, and by hooded cobras—in a superstition redeemed from contempt by the single sublime legend of Osiris. They were then monotheists, believing and declaring the unity of God, as Lord of universal nature, the God of the heavenly forces and of man's conscience—the Eternal God, in whose sight evil is but a transitory incident, the outcome of the creature's free will; one God, the everlasting antagonist of moral evil, destined speedily to be vanquished as the serpent beneath the heel of humanity. Yes, when all Asia held evil to be incurable and eternal and divine, the race of Abraham held that evil was "but for a moment," and that God's goodness and justice alone were eternal; and they stuck unto this testimony age after age, without varying, the witnesses alone and unconquerable in antiquity to the sole sovereignty and eternity of God. And it is they who have taught this lesson to the nations of the modern world. If we, the gloomy dwellers in these half-lighted lands of the North, are not still agonising in the terrific folds of an evil Power who is a match for all goodness, and the destined tormentor of the universe for ever, we owe it to Abraham and his sons, and to those precious books which have held their own race together through all their wanderings.

Under these references in thought, it becomes doubly interesting to note the phrases in which Christ and His apostles describe the relations of the good and evil powers. The New Testament affirms, as we have seen in the first lecture, in every form the historical truth of the Genesis narrative. In the Gospels, Christ's Messianic life begins

with a temptation by a personal devil. In Christ's teaching Satan is a real personality, he is a mighty king, and, in a lower sense, lord of this world. He claims all political sovereignty as his gift. He is "the prince" or ruler "of this world." But his origin is in measurable time, and his history is that of a murderous apostate who once dwelt in the light, but "standeth not in the truth." His destiny, too, is eternal damnation and destruction. So in St. Paul's writings, there is a "kingdom of darkness" and a "course of this world," from which Christians are delivered. There is even a "god of this world" and a prince of the aerial powers;" there are evil "princedoms in the heavenlies," but here, again, evil is a recent evolution—the work of unreason, of will that prefers government by passion to government by Divine law. And its end is destruction. St. John adds, "The Kosmos passeth away and its passion, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

It is but faintly we can imagine how the world of mankind breathed more freely when these glorious truths were first heard in Asia, crushed down under the dark ancestral belief in an eternal reign of evil, and beneath the stupefying fatalism to which it inevitably leads. When, then, Christ was made known as the messenger of the one eternal power of good, warring against an evil power which was not divine, and was not eternal, He was gladly listened to by Europeans and Asiatics, who had been confounded between the rival theories of dualism and atheism. His words to such were full of meaning and promise. "The water that I shall give him shall be

within him a fountain of water springing up to everlasting life." Early Christianity was as victorious in Eastern Asia as it was in Europe. But when Christianity was corrupted from its original simplicity, brightness, and power; when it ceased to speak in the tone in which the angels of Bethlehem sang of "glad tidings" to all nations; when it turned aside from its once joyful "wisdom" to absorb in the east the gloomy philosophies of Asia; when it first dallied with the dualistic gnostics, the magians of the Apostolic age; next with the Persian Manichæism, so called after a philosophic Magian painter, who brought the old accursed lie from Persia into Bulgaria, and incorporated it with Christianity; and when, finally, in the purer form of the theology of Augustine, who was but half delivered from his preceding Manichæism, it represented God as if, in one essence, He combined eternal good and eternal evil, so that it was possible under His reign, according to the pious bishop of Hippo, even for infants dying unbaptised to be consigned to eternal damnation; then Christianity ceased to possess the joyful power needful for the conquest of heathenism, specially of Asiatic heathenism in the East, and it fell a prey to Islam in the West.* It gradually became, under the influence of priestly celibacy, a power of darkness and terror, until at length the modern intellectual world of Europe is largely revolting from its sway.

* "It may therefore be rightly said that little ones, dying without baptism, will be in the mildest damnation of all. Yes, he greatly deceives and is deceived who preaches that they will not be in damnation."—*Augustine*, xii, 142.

The true remedy for the two intellectual apostacies, which have divided the world between them in all ages, is a return to the historical and joyful religion of the Bible, revealing a God under whose government freedom is a fact, involving the possibility of moral evil and its tremendous consequences, but under whose reign the exaltation of Evil into an eternal and victorious power is absolutely and for ever impossible. "The Lord sitteth above the waterfloods. The Lord sitteth King for ever." "And to the Son He saith, Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thy foes Thy footstool." "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

We are now in a position to appreciate more correctly the contention of those who would regard as a fable, having no foundation in fact, the history of the entrance of evil through the Serpent-tempter, placed at the beginning of the Hebrew Bible. Surely it could have been no mere fable, no mere allegory, which thus carried a whole theology, and philosophy, and civilisation along with it. It showed God the Beneficent as supreme, omnipresent, and eternal; and evil as a reptile perishing power. It engaged the will of man to a personal conflict, both in nature and in human life, with a mighty but a conquerable foe. *Resist the Devil and he will flee from you*, was the battle-cry through all ages. It showed all honest men that nothing was noble except goodness, nothing immortal but righteousness, that even the strongest and subtlest wickedness was ever ready to descend to the meanest concealments and falsehoods to attain its ends; but that all those ends should fail, because the history of

the earth and of mankind was destined to be that of a prolonged conflict of right against wrong, resulting in the enthronement of Justice in the person of the true Osiris, the Son of Mary, who is also the Son of God.

Lastly, turning to our own times, we are still in the thick of this awful and world-wide conflict; but oh, how glorious the retrospect of the war against evil, how marvellous the succession of victories already won, and how thrilling the hope that now shortly the atmosphere shall be cleansed from the pestilent influence of that dark "Power of the Air" which rains down falsehood and death upon the nations! We look back from this point, through all generations up to the earliest, upon a succession of battles in which truth-seekers have encountered the upholders of falsehood in every land; in which lovers of freedom have confronted tyrants and time-servers; in which political justice has struggled against political wrong; social right against oppressive privilege; scientific research against despotic superstition; honest faith and reforming criticism, against sacerdotal equivocation and blood-red popish cruelty. We look back upon those conflicts, equally glorious, in which the same lovers of truth, following the example of their Master (who, hated by both parties alike, and, facing their cross-fire, waged war against both Pharisees and Sadducees), have resisted the conceited materialism, and exaggerated scepticism, which have in all ages brought discredit on the names of Liberty and Progress; telling men sometimes that they have no souls, and the universe that it has no God, and the world that it has no future, except in the adoration of their own precious

memories, and history that it has no true record of any supernatural redemption. We look back upon those "decisive battles of the world," in which all of these foes have been again and again defeated,—battles whose very names are dear to the lovers of justice, of truth, of liberty, and of social order. We look back to those heroes of God, of religion, and of humanity, whose names shine as constellations of the zodiac in the eternal firmament of history; to Daniel in the den of lions, singly maintaining spiritual truth against all the power of Asia; to Socrates before the Athenian Demos; to St. Paul at Rome before Nero; to St. Columba of the Western Isles taming the barbarism of the North; to King Alfred, and Dante, and Wiclif, and Huss, and Savonarola, and Luther, and Zwingle, and Cromwell, and Milton, and Washington—names which still quicken the heart-beat of the world, and incite to valorous deeds the young soldiers of God in every land.

We look back also to-day upon the long succession of men who, during the past 210 years of this Ancient Lecture, have, in several churches in this city, carried on the conflict with "Apollyon" and his "fiery darts" of falsehood, by "the word of God," by "the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left," by exposition of the Sacred Scriptures, and by that ineffable influence, lifting men up to a better life, which comes from the fervent presence of holy genius and learning and devoted love.

Suppose that this phalanx of departed saints could visit us at this hour, with the earliest lecturers at their head—John Howe, that Living Temple, and Baxter, from the

Saint's Rest, and Owen, and Bates, and Manton, and Mead, and Alsop, and Daniel Williams; surrounded in the air by the many scores of godly scholars and thinkers who, during these last two centuries, down to the days of Dr. Raleigh and Mr. Binney, have followed them, and are now with the Lord—with what countenances would they from within the veil, flash upon us; with what tones of angelic energy, with one voice would they conjure us to “hold fast that faithful word,” of eternal judgment and eternal life, which they proclaimed in London; and, by the affirmation of positive truth—THUS SAITH THE LORD—to continue their warnings against all relapses Rome-wards—against a merely mercantile life, a formal churchmanship, a sectarian temper—against a Science which deifies blind second causes, a Faith which is a mass of uncertainties, a Philosophy which shudders at any distinct image of truth, and a Gospel corrupted by tradition, till men can no longer believe it either in Europe or Asia.

But these venerable, if invisible, spectators would not look down to-day upon a one-sided battle-field. The army of the Dragon is pressed on every side by the legions of the faithful, led on by captains in every department of thought, in Church and State, in politics, in the press, in science, in art, in literature, in religion, worthy of the last great conflicts. When God is forgotten or denied, then Men are extravagantly worshipped in His room. Investigators of nature, if they be but deniers of revelation, are now adored by sceptics and semi-sceptics as hero-gods; and the defenders of the faith, great and small alike, are presented to the ignorant multitude as insignificant adver-

saries by men who are half drunk with the arrogance of atheism.

But, notwithstanding all this contempt, there is no reason to despair of the Bible as a history, or of Christianity as a religion. We do not deny the striking intelligence of the adversaries. "The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." But the scientific army-list of England in our own time has also borne the names of Faraday, Rowan-Hamilton, Herschel, Rankine, Talbot, Andrews, Joule, Clerk-Maxwell, Balfour Stewart, Tait, Stokes, Sir William Thomson, Rolleston, Professor J. C. Adams, and Professor Henry Smith, of Oxford, who fell asleep but yesterday; and all these great men are, or have been, not only faithful to God in Christ, but sincere Christians, and humble believers in the Bible, as it stands in supernatural splendour before us. In the department of criticism and religious thought it were an insult to place against such men as Dr. Dorner, Dr. Delitzsch, and Bishop Lightfoot, and the company of scholars who now adorn European and American Christianity, the flippant scribes who sometimes, even with Christ's name on their lips, inspire and direct the unbelief of the multitude. Around *them* the battle waxes hot, and the hotter the better; but assuredly there are no signs of flight or defeat among the forces of Christendom, who are driving the enemy out of one after another of their lately vaunted positions. The belief in the living God is nowhere stronger than among many of the very foremost students of nature. The belief in Christ, the Son of God, is nowhere more fervent than among many of those who have fathomed all the depths of

ancient and modern philosophy. The belief in the Bible, as a whole, is nowhere more profound than among many of those who command a view of the literature of the world in all ages. And the belief in life eternal, through the Word made flesh, is nowhere more potent than in many of those who know all the reaches and "oppositions of science falsely so called."

I dare speak of the faith of no other men, as little dare I conceal my own. We may look forward now in this conflict between "the seed of the serpent" and the Son of the Virgin Mother, to a speedy victory. **THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S.** It is written before all nations on the Royal Exchange. It is written on the front of a more durable edifice, on the Temple of Truth in the Bible. The near future belongs to Christ. He reigns already by his Spirit in the hearts of a multitude that no man can number. He has told us that he is coming "quickly," to reign over the whole earth, as a new Power of the Air, in the heavenly places, when Satan shall be "shut up in the abyss" with his demons; for the last word of God shall be the confirmation of the first, "The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's head."

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven!" Gather out of this Thy kingdom, then, O Lord of the world! "all them that cause stumbling and that do iniquity," the ringleaders of evil in word and deed, and the "destroyers of the earth." Then shall the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; and "all nations shall be blessed in Him," who is "ALIVE FOR EVERMORE."



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